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ABSTRACT

In this effort to isolate personal characteristics which might influence the behavior of disruptive students, high school teachers were asked to identify disruptive students (inhibitors) and well-behaved students (facilitators). Out of this group, 59 inhibitors and 86 facilitators were selected for study. All subjects were administered the Quality of School Life Instrument, the Inventory of Values, and the Motivation Inventory. Not surprisingly, results showed that facilitators, as compared to inhibitors, perceived school life as more satisfying, their classes as more interesting, and their teachers as more effective. A large difference between the two groups' scores on the National Educational Development Test suggested a strong connection between classroom behavior and achievement. The combined consideration of all findings revealed the classroom inhibitor to be a comparatively unhappy, frightened student with a less-than-average achievement record. (Author/EP)

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ATTITUDES, VALUES AND MOTIVES OF CLASSROOM FACILITATORS AND INHIBITORS

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In a recent review, Duke (1978) cites the results of polls and news articles which suggest that the behavior of American students is an increasingly serious national problem. He points out that investigators have searched for the causes of this phenomenon in the deviants' families (Duke and Duke, 1978), peer groups (Palonsky, 1975), teachers (Kauffman, 1977), school systems (West, 1975) and the society (Havighurst, 1974). Duke suggests that it is time we began to hold the students responsible for their own actions and focus on personal characteristics that might influence their behaving and misbehaving.

One way of going about this is to contrast some attributes of disruptive students with those of students who seem well adjusted to life in the schools. In an unpublished doctoral study of a small urban high school, Duffy (1971) contrasted the attitudes and behaviors of 20 faculty-identified problem students with those of an equal stratified random sample of all other students. The data revealed that problem students were more often involved in reckless and inappropriate behaviors, had greater needs for attention and recognition, and preferred teachers whom they felt were concerned and interested in them.

Srivastava (1972) also used teachers to identify 30 disciplined and 30 indisciplined students from three Hindu high schools. The Hindi version of Cattell's High School Personality Questionnaire (1965) was administered to both groups. The results showed the indisciplined students to be significantly more excitable, impatient, demanding and overactive, assertive, independent, aggressive, stubborn and dominant, and tense. Disciplined students were found to be more intelligent, better abstract thinkers, more persevering, rulebound, reflective, internally restrained and willing to act.

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In the present study, we also used high school teachers to identify disruptive (inhibitors) and well-behaved (facilitators) students and measured differences in their motives, values and attitudes toward school.

Procedure

All teachers of a small (450-student) high school were asked to help identify classroom facilitators and inhibitors. Facilitators were defined as "students whose classroom conduct usually promotes the optimum learning of their classmates. They are constructive and cooperative and almost never disrupt the class."

Inhibitors were defined as students whose classroom conduct "often spoils the learning climate for their classmates. They are relatively destructive, uncooperative and often disrupt the class."

The teachers were asked to rate every pupil in each of their classes on the five-point scale below.

5 = usually facilitates learning
4 = often facilitates learning
3 = doesn't clearly inhibit or facilitate learning
2 = often inhibits learning
1 = usually inhibits learning

Each teacher then supplied lists of students rated in the highest one-fourth (facilitators) and in the lowest one-fourth (inhibitors) of each class.

Students who did not appear on both lists and who had been nominated by two or more teachers were chosen as subjects for the experiment. Fifty-nine inhibitors and eighty-six facilitators were identified. As you can see in Tables 1 and 2, both groups are fairly balanced for the sexes and spread across all grades.

About a week after the two lists were finalized, all inhibitors and facilitators were administered the Quality of School Life (QSL) Instrument (Epstein and McPartland, 1976, 1977), the Inventory of Values (Gnagey, 1979, p. 135) and the Motivation Inventory (Gnagey, 1979, p. 35).

The QSL measures satisfaction with school in general, commitment to school work, and attitudes toward teachers. Each of the three subscales has been painstakingly validated (Epstein and McPartland, 1976, 1978; Nimmer, 1978). The Kuder-Richardson reliability of the total score for secondary students approaches .90. Since facilitators appear to be so well adjusted to school life, we predicted that they would score significantly higher than inhibitors on all three subscales.

The Inventory of Values, like Allport, Vernon and Lindzey's Study of Values (1960), is based upon Spranger's (1928) six value types. It yields scores for theoretical, economic, aesthetic, social, political and religious values. In order to establish the reliability of this inventory, it was administered twice to a sample of 60 high school students who were not subjects in the study. The two administrations were a week apart. Reliability coefficients for the six subscores ranged from .52 to .76, averaging .61 (see Table 3).

Since a high theoretical (T) score indicates interest in a rational, truth-seeking approach to life, we predicted that facilitators, who seem to like learning, would score higher than inhibitors, who seem frustrated in school. A high social (S) score indicates a kind and sympathetic attitude toward others. Almost by definition, we predicted that inhibitors would score lower on this value than facilitators. Since one might expect a high religious (R) score to correlate with moral values and acceptable behavior, we predicted that facilitators would score higher than inhibitors. Predictions about economic (E), aesthetic (A) and political (P) differences between facilitators and inhibitors were not as easily derived.

The Motivation Inventory is based on Abraham H. Maslow's (1970) model of human motivation. The 30-item instrument had been developed in a previous study (Gnagey, 1978) from six phrases describing activities thought to be

closely related to each of Maslow's need categories except aesthetic. The inventory was administered twice to a sample of 86 junior high students who were not subjects in the study. The two administrations were one week apart. Product moment correlation coefficients between the two sets of scores were computed for each motive category. Correlations for the six motives ranged from .57 to .66, averaging .61 (see Table 4).

Maslow asserts that human needs are hierarchical and must usually be satisfied in the following order: physiological (P), safety (S), love and belonging (L), self-esteem (E), knowledge (K) and self-actualization (SA). According to his theory, self-actualized persons are the best adjusted, having their lower needs satisfied and being motivated to become in actuality what they are potentially.

On the surface, facilitators seem better adjusted to school and show fewer overt signs of frustration than inhibitors. We, therefore, hypothesized that facilitators would be more influenced by their esteem, knowledge and self-actualization needs than would inhibitors. For the same reasons, we expected inhibitors to be more influenced by their physiological, safety and love and belonging needs than their facilitator counterparts.

Results and Conclusions

Although correlations between sex and the total score have previously been shown to be near zero (Epstein and McPartland, 1976), the Quality of School Life (QSL) data were analyzed separately for the sexes. As expected for both sexes, facilitators scored significantly higher ($p<.01$) than inhibitors on all scales of the QSL instrument (see Tables 5 and 6). Evidently, as compared to inhibitors, facilitators perceive school life as more satisfying (S), their classes as more interesting (C), and their teachers as more effective (T).

We consider these findings a validation of our teacher-nomination procedure for identifying facilitators and inhibitors. They square with the QSL validation data showing a positive correlation with classroom behavior and negative correlations with cutting classes and cutting school (Epstein and McPartland, 1976, p. 21).

A post hoc check of achievement test scores also supports the QSL validity data. SRA National Educational Development (Science Research Associates, 1964) composite scores were available for 36 freshman-sophomore inhibitors and 46 freshman-sophomore facilitators. As can be seen in Table 7, the mean percentile rank of the facilitators (80.6) was nearly double that of the inhibitors (43.6). This difference was significant at the .01 level ($t = 7.5$, $df = 56$).

And so it seems quite apparent that, compared to facilitators, students judged by their teachers to be inhibitors are less able academically, like school life less, are less committed to their classes and believe their teachers to be less effective.

Because the value directions measured by the Inventory of Values have previously been shown to differ between the sexes (Allport, Vernon and Lindzey, 1960), the data were analyzed separately. No significant differences between facilitators and inhibitors were found for any value score for either sex (see Tables 8 and 9). It appears that either value orientations such as these are not related to being a facilitator or inhibitor, or that the extremely restricted range of scores produced by the instrument have obscured any differences.

The data from the Motivation Inventory were analyzed separately for the sexes. While no other female comparisons neared significance, female inhibitors made a mean safety score of .75 while the mean for female facilitators was only .30 ($.05<p<.10$) (see Table 10). Male inhibitors also made higher

safety need scores ($\bar{x}$ = 1.30) than male facilitators ($\bar{x}$ = 0.49). This difference was significant at the .01 level (see Table 11).

Male facilitators also made higher esteem need scores ($\bar{x}$ = 3.1) than did male inhibitors ($\bar{x}$ = 2.6). This difference approached the .05 level (see Table 11). No other male comparisons neared significance.

These differences in safety needs (the higher the score, the less safe one feels) are supported by the QSL validity data that show a substantial negative correlation between scores on the instrument and anxiety about school. They also lend support to our hypothesis that inhibitors are motivated more by the lower needs than facilitators.

The nearly significant difference in male esteem scores also supports our prediction that facilitators are motivated more by high-level needs than inhibitors. However, these differences didn't appear for the two highest level needs and so must be considered highly tentative.

Other differences may have been obscured by the severely restricted range of scores produced by the instrument. (The Motivation Inventory has been recently revised to produce a greater range of scores.)

Discussion

It should be pointed out that we are looking at the differences between two extremely divergent groups. Since both inhibitors and facilitators were nominated by two or more teachers, and since no student who appeared on both lists was used, they are about as close as we could get to "pure types."

It is also important to remember that students were categorized as a result of their teachers' perception of their disruptive or supportive function in the classroom setting. The list might have been quite different if their peers had done the nominating. A sociometric follow-up study of both groups could be quite revealing.

It is hardly startling to find that disruptive students don't like school. Since their teachers nominated them, it was to be expected that their QSL-T scores would be comparatively low. The feeling is obviously mutual. It is significant, however, that this same difference appeared in the other two QSL subscores, confirming our assertion that we have discriminated "pure types."

The huge differences in the National Educational Development scores suggest a strong connection between classroom behavior and achievement. Further research is necessary to assess the contributions of intelligence and motivation to this discrepancy. A study is now underway to determine if differences in locus of control may be a factor.

The finding that inhibitors may be more fearful for their own safety than facilitators raises some interesting questions. The safety item on the Motivation Inventory was "Being careful so that nothing bad happens to me." This is sufficiently general so that we cannot say for sure how much anxiety is school related and how much is peer related.

The tendency for male facilitators to feel more compelled to seek esteem than their inhibitor counterparts suggests that inhibitors may be so involved in fulfilling their safety, and perhaps other lower needs, that "Becoming a good person that others can look up to" (the inventory item) is not yet important to them.

In any case, the classroom inhibitor begins to emerge as a comparatively unhappy, frightened student with a less than average record of achievement. As our continued studies enlarge and clarify the portrait, we hope to gain a greater understanding of educational techniques that might improve the quality of school life for these disruptive students and their teachers.

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TABLE 1

ANALYSIS OF INHIBITORS BY SEX AND YEAR IN SCHOOL

Year in School	Sex F	Sex M	Total
Freshman	8	10	18
Sophomore	6	13	19
Junior	6	4	10
Senior	9	3	12
Total	29	30	59

TABLE 2

ANALYSIS OF FACILITATORS BY SEX AND YEAR IN SCHOOL

Year in School	Sex F	Sex M	Total
Freshman	4	12	16
Sophomore	14	16	30
Junior	8	9	17
Senior	13	10	23
Total	39	47	86

TABLE 3

PRODUCT MOMENT CORRELATIONS BETWEEN VALUE SCORES ON TWO ADMINISTRATIONS OF THE INVENTORY OF VALUES TO 47 HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

Value	Pearson r*
Theoretical	.519
Economic	.764
Aesthetic	.549
Social	.558
Political	.524
Religious	.742
Composite Mean	.610

*All coefficients are significant at the .01 level.

TABLE 4

PRODUCT MOMENT CORRELATIONS BETWEEN MOTIVE SCORES ON TWO ADMINISTRATIONS OF THE MOTIVATION INVENTORY TO 86 SEVENTH AND EIGHTH GRADERS

Need	Pearson r*
To Know	.655
Self-Actualization	.639
Esteem	.659
Love and Belonging	.595
Safety	.569
Physiological	.569
Composite Mean	.614

*All coefficients are significant at the .001 level.

TABLE 5

COMPARISON OF THE MEAN QUALITY OF SCHOOL LIFE SUBSCORES OF FEMALE FACILITATORS AND INHIBITORS

Group	N	S	C	T	Q
Inhibitors	29	2.62	3.79	5.87	12.17
Facilitators	39	3.97	5.69	8.00	17.64
t		3.72	2.83	3.60	3.96
df*		54	53	49	49
p		<.01	<.01	<.01	<.01

*Degrees of freedom are approximate. A t-test for unmatched groups with different variances was used.

TABLE 6

COMPARISON OF THE MEAN QUALITY OF SCHOOL LIFE SUBSCORES OF MALE FACILITATORS AND INHIBITORS

Group	N	S	C	T	Q
Inhibitors	30	1.43	2.30	3.33	7.07
Facilitators	47	2.74	4.58	7.00	14.28
t		3.58	4.32	6.79	5.85
df*		69	71	59	65
p		<.01	<.01	<.01	<.01

*Degrees of freedom are approximate. A t-test for unmatched groups with different variances was used.

TABLE 7

COMPARISON OF MEAN PERCENTILE RANK OF COMPOSITE SCORES FOR SRA NATIONAL EDUCATION DEVELOPMENT TEST BETWEEN FRESHMAN AND SOPHOMORE INHIBITORS AND FACILITATORS

Group	N	Mean PR
Inhibitors	36	43.6
Facilitators	46	80.6
t		7.50
df*		56
p		.01

*Degrees of freedom are approximate. A t-test for unmatched groups with different variances was used.

TABLE 8

COMPARISON OF MEAN VALUE SCORES FOR FEMALE INHIBITORS AND FACILITATORS

Group	N	T	E	A	S	P	R
Inhibitors	29	2.93	1.83	3.24	3.72	1.72	1.58
Facilitators	39	2.85	1.38	3.41	3.28	2.07	2.05
t		0.25	1.34	0.53	1.41	1.01	0.96
df*		65	65	59	56	58	63
p		NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS

*Degrees of freedom are approximate. A t-test for unmatched groups with different variances was used.

TABLE 9

COMPARISON OF MEAN VALUE SCORES FOR MALE INHIBITORS AND FACILITATORS

Group	N	T	E	A	S	P	R
Inhibitors	30	2.83	2.33	2.33	3.50	1.83	1.70
Facilitators	47	3.15	2.11	2.57	3.63	1.91	1.57
t		0.90	0.62	0.78	0.43	0.29	0.33
df*		68	60	59	61	70	66
p		NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS

*Degrees of freedom are approximate. A t-test for unmatched groups with different variances was used.

TABLE 10

COMPARISON OF MEAN MOTIVE SCORES FOR FEMALE INHIBITORS AND FACILITATORS

Group	N	SA	C	E	L	S	P
Inhibitors	29	2.31	2.69	3.40	3.45	0.75	2.41
Facilitators	39	2.64	3.13	3.50	2.97	0.30	2.56
t		0.91	1.29	0.46	1.58	1.75	0.38
df*		62	63	64	61	48	59
p		NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS

*Degrees of freedom are approximate. A t-test for unmatched groups with different variances was used.

TABLE 11

COMPARISON OF MEAN MOTIVE SCORES FOR MALE INHIBITORS AND FACILITATORS

Group	N	SA	K	E	L	S	P
Inhibitors	30	3.13	2.67	2.60	3.10	1.30	2.33
Facilitators	47	3.23	2.85	3.10	3.10	0.49	2.15
t		0.31	0.67	1.95	----	3.05	0.57
df*		69	69	67	58	48	65
p		NS	NS	NS	NS	<.01	NS

*Degrees of freedom are approximate. A t-test for unmatched groups with different variances was used.